

Exile

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Daniel: Resolve to Thrive

Daniel 1:1-21

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- July 5, 2020

Well, good morning, Grace. It's the Fourth of July weekend ... but it wasn't. And we're supposed to have baby dedications on Fourth of July weekends, and we don't. There has been so much loss this year. In the context of the church and the church community, it is going through life together. We missed out on Resurrection Sunday, a Mother's Day special event, and now another family dedication. We can't go to weddings or funerals. There's a lot to grieve during these times. Things are not right. We are not meant to live in this kind of isolation. I miss us. I really do. I can't wait to get back together. We'll see.

This year we're looking at going through the Bible. We're reading through the Bible together, the year of the Bible at Grace Covenant Church. And we're studying through the Bible as well. And when we're doing this campaign together on Sunday mornings, we're in a place in the Bible, the epic, that's called the exile period. At this point in the storyline, God has warned multiple times through various prophets, for Israel to repent and return. And they need to come and trust in the Lord. If they don't, they will be on their own to provide and protect themselves. And they'll have to suffer the consequences for that. And they turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to God's warnings, and they continue to have for centuries high-handed, rebellious, proud sin. And then, God just says, *That's enough. That's it.*

And so, the northern tribes are taken by Assyria and they are scattered all over the Middle East. And now what we look at today is the southern tribes. They're called Judah. They're going to be taken captive and exiled by the Babylonian empire. That's where we pick up in the Book of Daniel. It's in the context of this captivity that Daniel writes his diary about what it's like to live in that context. And when he writes about it, he writes about it in a way to thrive, not just survive.

Those were crazy times then. These are crazy times now. It's insane right now. The moral fabric, not just of our country, but in the whole world, has been torn apart. What was once shamefully hidden is now publicly celebrated. What was at one time unimaginable is now commonplace. Virtue is mocked and vice is celebrated. The foundations have been destroyed. And this is a time when we need a book like Daniel, a man like Daniel. His character gives us a template for how to—not just to live in this time of life and survive that—but rather to thrive in that. He steps into our confusion and into our fear and says, *Listen. You can live with integrity. You can show yourself to be a righteous individual and live in such a way as to draw attention to the glory of God, to celebrate Him and make Him famous.*

How Did Daniel Thrive?

Daniel found a way in a culture far more decadent and hostile than our current situation. He found a way to thrive with integrity. How did he do it? There are three principles. Chapter 1 is almost a summary of his book, his autobiography. We'll look at that in just a moment. But you need to understand the context first.

In 605 B.C. in the Battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar, who is the king of Babylon, absolutely annihilates the Egyptian army. Now he's king of the hill. He rules the modern world, in some respects, in that context. And he's the world power, and part of the spoils of war is to take Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. And he goes in there and besieges it.

Daniel 1:1-2

In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of God. These he brought to the land of Shinar, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods.

I want you to see in the first two sentences of the Book of Daniel—listen to the mood and the power and the humiliation that's going on here. Daniel chapter 1, verses 1 and 2: “In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as

some of the vessels of the house of God. These he brought to the land of Shinar”—Babylon—
“and placed those vessels in the treasury of the gods there.”

Do you hear the humiliation? The terror that’s going on? What’s happening there? The Babylonian way of defeating someone is to absolutely destroy them. To destroy them physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. There’s no restraint, there’s no war ethics when it comes to Babylonian war. When they say “besiege”, it means to burn down. It means to loot all the treasuries. They rape all they want, they kill without any discretion. And it looks like—this is happening in a moment, but it’s taken years to get to this place. And it would have been a terrible time to have lived, a terrifying time to live in Jerusalem. Because they must be thinking back about the promises of God. This is Israel, God’s chosen people, and they’re just coming out of a prime place in their history, in some respects. They have a capital city and it’s a holy city, and they have a temple now. And all things are good. And the promises that God made to Abraham that are being fulfilled—He made a promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12—that’s the storyline that we’re working our way through, that Abraham would become a great nation, and that nation would be a blessing. And He would bless Abraham to be blessings to other people. And through that nation, the whole world would be blessed. Where did that promise go? Jerusalem is in ashes. And Babylon has won. *Where’s YHWH now? Where are His promises? Is He powerless? Has He abandoned us?* Can you imagine the existential drama that’s going on in the souls of the people of Israel, the people of faith?

When Nebuchadnezzar comes into Jerusalem, they take everything precious—everything. They take the precious metals and jewels, for sure. But they take the precious things that are in the temple and bring them to their temple to mock the God of Israel. And they take the precious children. They take the children. And they’re going to make those children prisoners of war. And the reason they’re going to take them back to Babylon is to convert them. They’re going to make them Babylonians so they can serve Babylon.

Daniel 1:4b-7

...they were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the royal rations of food and wine. They were to be educated for three years, so that at the end of that time they could be stationed in the king's court. ⁶ Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, from the tribe of Judah. ⁷ The palace master gave them other names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Babylon is the Borg. You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile. Listen to what happens to them. They take these prime children and they bring them back to Babylon. And it says in verses 3 through 7: "... they were taught the literature and the language of the Chaldeans. The king assigned them daily portions of the royal rations of food and wine. They were to be educated for three years, so that at the end of that time they could be stationed in the king's court. Now among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, from the tribe of Judah." Those are their Jewish names. "The palace master gave them other names: Daniel would be called Belteshazzar, Hananiah would be called Shadrach, Mishael will be called Meshach, and Azariah will be called Abednego."

They're taking their YHWH-centered names and giving them pagan god-centered names. Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated. You're going to eat our rich food. You're going to go through our education process which will be a three-year—what would be comparable to the United States military academies. And they're going to learn their ways, and by the end of this they're going to wrap themselves in a Babylonian flag. They'll be proud to be part of that country.

They're going to learn the language of the Chaldeans. And do you know why? Because when you learn a language, if you really know what those words mean, you start thinking that way. Language is a world view. And so, they're going to learn the world view of the Babylonians.

He changes their names. And do you know why? Because they could. That's an expression of dominance. *I own you. Forget what your mommy and daddy called you—I'm going*

to call you something else. Because at the end of this, you're going to have a new identity. The Babylonian way is to start with Orwell's 1984 and have power and dominance, and then move to A Brave New World where we're just going to seduce you into submission. We're going to give you this luxurious diet, we're going to give you this stellar education, you're going to learn the language of our people and world view, you're going to get new names, you'll be a new person. You'll be one of us soon enough.

It's the death of dreams. The people that left Jerusalem, that survived that slaughter and then left Jerusalem and went back to Babylon, lost their dreams. And sometimes the death of the dream is the deepest of all griefs. That's what they're suffering right here.

Three Principles for Thriving

Verses 1 and 2: And then ... and then ... in Daniel's diary, just from a plotline, storytelling perspective, there's a radical change in the direction of the plot and the mood and the tone. After hearing about what happened, it is in this context that we learn the three principles about how to thrive. This is Daniel saying, *This is what we did. Here's how we had to live with this. Three principles.*

1. Resolve to Thrive

Daniel 1:8-9

But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master.

And the first principle is this: Resolve to thrive. Verses 8 and 9 say, "But Daniel resolved"—some translations say "he resolved in his heart"—"resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not

to defile himself. Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master.”

So, he went to the palace master and said, *We're not going to eat the food and the wine. Can we have an alternative?* And the palace master said, *Listen, I love you guys. I don't know why, but I have compassion towards you. But listen, if you guys show yourself to be malnourished, the king will literally behead me. So, I can't afford to do this.*

So, Daniel comes up with a idea. He says, *Listen. We're going to go for ten days on just a vegetable and water diet. And if we come back in ten days and we're not right, we'll take responsibility for that. Would you just give us this experiment?* And he did. He let them do it.

And so, it goes on. He wouldn't defile himself. Let me explain this. He wouldn't defile himself with the royal food and wine. What that could mean is some of that food might have been against the Jewish diet, it might have been offered to false gods, maybe. It's difficult to know for sure because, more than likely, the vegetables were also offered to false idols. So, I think what a lot of people will come to understand is that it most likely means that there had to be some place in this brain-washing transition that Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, *We have to say no to something. We have to stop the onslaught of this slippery sludge of becoming like them. We need to find a place where we can say, "God, we're going to have to trust You to show up here. Show yourself to be a sovereign God that's in control of even our bodies, independent of our diet. Will you show us this way? Can we just do this one thing?"* They resolved not to defile themselves.

Just a few years ago, tragedy kicked in the front door of Becky Powell and her children. She writes about it in a book called *Awful Beautiful Life*. She used to attend here—a lovely family, a lovely lady. And the story is that her husband took his own life and left \$15 million in debt. And that indebtedness was to many of their good friends and acquaintances. And Becky had to choose. It was the death of a lot of her dreams. And then she had to resolve. Because the easiest thing to do would be to just float, like a dead fish down the river, and just let bitterness and anger and depression and defeat define her.

In the book she writes that she resolved. She resolved three things. One, that she would wake up every day and clean up and get ready, because she wasn't going to slip into a depression of laziness. And that's how it starts. Make your bed. She resolved no alcohol. That never helps. And three, she resolved to pay every single person back, no matter what, for the glory of God.

And God blessed her. It was God's mercy plus her resolve, and she did it. She trusted God to thrive.

The first principle: you must resolve not to be defiled. You must resolve to be holy. You must resolve to become like Christ in all of life, no matter the circumstance. Boom.

2. Power in Community

The second thing we learn in Daniel's life in this situation, from his biography here, is that there is power in community. Daniel knew that he could never survive being a prisoner of war all by himself. It's throughout the book, it's Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And they're going through various expressions of prisoner-of-war torture and life-threatening situations. But they're going to stay together. They're in a small group. They're in a band of brothers.

There's a wonderful book by Dr. Segal called *Winning Life's Toughest Battles*. And he looks at various ways people have thrived in terrible situations. In one section he's talking about the Vietnam War, and particularly one officer named James Stockdale. James Stockdale was in the Hanoi Hilton for 2,714 days. That's just about seven and a half years. Here's how he did it.

On a regular basis they would take Jim outside and string him up. They would shackle him up to these posts and leave him out in the blazing hot sun three days, his body blistered head to toe. If he were to fall asleep, they would beat him with rods to wake him up.

And then one time they were especially harsh, and while they were beating him, he heard these towels popping in the distance, and he thought that was strange. And then he started to notice that there was a sequence in the towels and the way they were making the noise, and he remembered Morse code. And the boys back in the shelters were saying, G, B, U, J, S—God bless you, Jim Stockdale. And it gave him the ability to survive that.

The men realized they could not get through that prisoner-of-war experience by themselves. They had to work together. And they came up with some very creative ways to communicate and encourage—all encouraging words. They would shuffle their feet when they were being taken from one cell to another. They would cough in code, sneeze in code, blow their nose in code. And they made it through it because they made it through together.

It is not good for man to be alone. We were meant and designed for community. And that's why this season with this COVID-19 is especially difficult—not physically, but also

emotionally and spiritually. And I've got to ask you—Do you have a community? Do you have a group of people—not for fun—that's a great kind of friendship—but do you have some friends for your soul's sake? Some friends that are committed to helping you become like Christ in all of life? Some friends that will lighten your burden and exaggerate your joys? You need that. It's not a want, it's a need. It's a soul need. I would suggest—I would really just open up our church to you. Go to our website and look at the men's Bible studies that are available, the women's Bible studies. You can still join any of our youth Bible studies, that's for certain. And see how you can get involved in those. You can go on our website and ask to join one of our neighborhood care groups. And when you go to our website—because we can't talk to you, you have to go to the website—I'm sorry—but ask specifically, *Can you help me? Can you help me find a friend, maybe, so that I can hear some kind of Morse code from God himself in my times of suffering? I'm starting to realize that the Lone Ranger thing isn't working.*

That's what we learn from Daniel's book. He resolved to do it together.

3. Almighty, Sovereign YHWH

And third is almighty, sovereign YHWH. What you think about God is the single most important thing about you. And Daniel believed in God Almighty, YHWH. And he believed that YHWH was still sovereign, and that means “in control.”

Researchers will tell you that the reason people take their own lives in difficult times is not because of the intensity of the suffering. It is because they don't see purpose in the suffering. It's not the pain. It's the purposeless pain that causes them to take their own lives. You don't see suicide notes often that are written about poor health or the situation of finances that they're in or a sense of rejection. It is a hopelessness in that context that causes people to take their lives. They find no purpose in that. They think that God can't work here, or God can't work now; that God can only work when things are just right.

God has yet to bless anyone except where they actually are. If we faithlessly discard situation after situation, moment after moment, as not being right, we will simply have no place to receive His kingdom into our life.

--Dallas Willard

Listen to what Dallas Willard says about that way of thinking about God. “God has yet to bless anyone except where they actually are. If we faithlessly disregard situation after situation, moment after moment, as not being right, we will simply have no place to receive His kingdom in to our life.”

What you think about God is the most important thing about you. If you think God has to have things teed up for Him to be able to bring the kingdom of God into your life, what kind of god is that? It’s not the God that Daniel’s talking about here. It’s not the size of the faith that Daniel has that we are supposed to emulate. It is who he has faith in. These are his words from his autobiography. This is his diary. We know what kind of god he believes in. If you want to thrive in this culture, you don’t need greater faith; you need to believe in the true YHWH God that’s in the Bible. That’s why Jesus says, “All you need is faith the size of a mustard seed”, the smallest seed in the ancient Near East, in the power of YHWH God.

So, some people—I get it—they work themselves up in their understanding of who God is and they need to get to a place where they can believe in a God that can take down an Egyptian pharaoh by flexing His righteous right arm and taking those ten plagues and collapsing an ocean on an army. Yeah, that’s right, the power of God. But you also have to believe in a God so powerful and intelligent that He can win by losing, by surrendering.

God Allowed the Defeat of Jerusalem

In Daniel’s autobiography, in those two sentences that are the darkest and most forbearing, the introduction, he says that God allowed this defeat. God allowed the defeat. In other words, Babylon wasn’t a tragic victory of evil over good; it was part of God’s permissive will. That’s the power of the God that Daniel believes in.

Daniel 1:2

The LORD let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of God. These he brought to the land of Shinar, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods.

Look at what it says in verse 2: “The Lord let”—that’s his theology, that’s Daniel thinking—“The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of God.” The humiliation of God there ... “These he brought to the land of Shinar, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods.” Daniel believed that God let Babylon besiege—Nebuchadnezzar besiege—Jerusalem. Daniel believed that God allowed, permitted, Nebuchadnezzar to take the sacred things and humiliate YHWH by bringing them into the holy place of their false gods. Daniel believed that God in His permissive will, some kind of plan that he doesn’t understand, allowed Babylon to take the precious children as prisoners of war. Daniel believes that God is meek. And meek does not mean powerless or weak. It is literally described, defined, as “strength under control.” It is a Clydesdale that’s prancing on cue, not charging.

Let me put it this way. If you were, I don’t know, if you broke into someone’s house and you’re going to go in there to loot that place, and you walk in and there sits, on the couch, Chuck Norris. And he’s sitting there watching *Walker, Texas Ranger* reruns. And you look at him and he looks at you, and you’re thinking, *I came here to rob the place, so Chuck’s not moving ...* So you start going through the house. And you take some of his precious stuff and you turn some couches over and you tear the place apart and knock his refrigerator over. And on the way out you look at him and he looks at you, and you go over to his coffee table and you take his Beretta model 92 that he used in *Walker, Texas Ranger*, sitting right there. And you take that gun as you pick up his TV and walk out of the house.

Can I ask you a question? Did you just rob Chuck Norris? Or did Chuck Norris let you rob him? Just saying ... I don’t know why Chuck Norris would let you do that, but you’re going to regret it, aren’t you? Yeah.

I don’t know why God allowed all this to happen, but you’re going to regret it, Nebuchadnezzar. He did.

God Provided the Favor God Caused the Weight Gain

You see what's happening? He believed that God was so big and so strong, he could let God do what He wanted by losing. He said that. He said that God provided favor and compassion in the palace master's mind. That's why they were able to try this little ten-day experiment. It's assumed that God caused miraculous weight gain when they came back after ten days. These guys were bigger and stronger than the guys that were eating the big buffets. And do you know why? They were eating vegetables and water, just for these ten days—do you know why they came back? Because that's miraculous. Nobody on a vegan diet gets bigger and stronger. Everybody knows that. Ask around. I know, I've upset some people, but that's okay. We're not meeting, so I can say whatever I want up here.

God Gave Wisdom

Here's the fourth thing. God gave that small group wisdom. God blessed them in their studies.

Daniel 1:18-20

At the end of the time that the king had set for them to be brought in, the palace master brought them into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, ¹⁹ and the king spoke with them. And among them all, no one was found to compare with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they were stationed in the king's court. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

Look what it says in verses 18 through 20. “At the end of the time”—the three years—“that the king had set for them to be brought in, the palace master brought them into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, and the king spoke with them.” Now listen—this is their graduation event,

right? This is three years after, this is their big event. Who's going to take the awards? And here's what happens. "And among them all, no one was found to compare with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." Those are the Hebrew names of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, because they're using the Hebrew names here. This is Daniel saying, *Yeah, we're still using our Hebrew names.* "Therefore they were stationed in the king's court." Look, it gets better. "In every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom." In that graduating class, these four men in a small group that resolved to do this together and believing in a big, huge, sovereign God went not just to the top of the class; they didn't take just all the awards in that graduation. They replaced the existing men of wisdom and advisers to the king.

God Proves Supreme Over the Babylonians

There's another way that Daniel shows that you can thrive in any circumstance. There's another way that Daniel shows that God is sovereign and powerful, even when He's meek. The last sentence in chapter 1—it stands all by itself, it's a paragraph all alone. And if you remember, verses 1 and 2 were "Oh, no—Nebuchadnezzar."

Daniel 1:21

And Daniel continued there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Here's what happens at the end, vs. 21: "And Daniel continued there until the first year of King Cyrus." King Cyrus, you need to know, is the king of Persia. Daniel is showing here that he outlived Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. Daniel is writing this saying, *Yeah, this is a seventy-year diary that's going on, and I've passed everyone up by being quiet and polite and meek.* He was the adviser of three tyrants in two empires.

Verse 1 and 2 of chapter 1 say, *I am Nebuchadnezzar. I am the king of the hill. I rule the world I do whatever I want to, to whomever I want. I'm in charge here.*

Daniel says here, *You remember Nebuchadnezzar? Ummm...let me think. Oh, right, yes, I worked for him right out of college. I was kind of an intern. Let me think. Where is he now? So, I*

think he was cremated and his remains are used to plug a hole in the wall. Yeah... I think. I don't know. Anyway, that's been so long ago.

You know what he's saying? Daniel's name means "God is judge." And God judged Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was constantly under threat of being killed by these savages, and yet Daniel dies of old age. Do you see? Daniel is showing that he believes in a sovereign God. He resolved to be holy and he resolved to do it in community. And he resolved to be with his band of brothers in believing in the greatness of the God that is described in the Bible, even if he didn't understand.

The times are never so bad that a good man cannot live in them.

--St. Thomas More

Thomas More is a saint in the Catholic church. He says, "The times are never so bad that a good man can't live in them."

Daniel would say, "Times are never so bad that a good man can't thrive in them."

We should thrive.

Here's what it looks like. I'll bet by now—we're way more than ninety days into this mess—I'll bet by now the things that used to work are not working any more. Maybe some of the things that served you have become your master. You want to be a better husband, a better mother, a better friend? Something has to change, and you can't change it. And Daniel comes to us and says, *Hey, I can help.*

Just say this, for example: you could be addicted to wine or whining. And you need to overcome that somehow. And you can't by yourself, all alone, in our own willpower. You've figured that out by now.

So now you resolve. You resolve, *I want to become like Christ in this part of my life. That's what I have to do. I resolve it.* And two, you say, *I can't do this alone.* And so, you team up with a person, not a golf buddy, not a car buddy, not a sewing friend. It's for the purpose of soul maturation, to become like Christ in all of life, to glorify God.

And you say, *Look, I'll tell you what. While you're giving up whining, maybe I could give up wine, and we could do this together. I don't know what that means, honestly. It means that we could go to Celebrate Recovery here at Grace, or you could buy a twelve-step book online and*

say, *“We’re going to go through it together once a week. As you give up whining, I’m going to give up wine.”*

And third, *we’re going to grow in our understanding of the power of the sovereignty of God; that we see that there’s a bigger picture than my moral failures or anything else; that God can make something glorious out of the mess I’ve turned my life into.*

When you step back far enough and aren’t so concerned about your own self, you start realizing, *You know what? My family has generations of various addictions, and here I am, I’m an addict now. You know what, though? You could say, Maybe there was a bigger purpose for this. Or maybe God can use this for His bigger purpose, so that maybe I can serve other people with addictions. Yeah, maybe it’s not about me. Maybe it’s about me serving other people. Maybe someday I can actually thank God for that. Maybe in this bigger picture I’ll see that God is working in all circumstances in every moment. He doesn’t have to have it set up and teed up for him.*

That you’ve been spoiled your whole life; your parents maybe meant well, to pamper you and never have you take responsibility and give you free stuff all the time. And you say, *You know what? That’s a part of my life, but I want to see You, God. I want to see You forge steel out of the marshmallow that I am. I want to see You make something like integrity. I want You to help me do the right thing, the hard thing. Help me do the hard thing, the extra mile. Help me learn how to take responsibility for my choices. And then I can help other people who grew up in a house where they had everything provided for them and now they don’t know how the world works. Think about that.*

What if we had a church full of people come to this realization: that *I can’t get to where God wants me to be without some kind of stake in the ground where I say, “I resolve. I have decided to follow Jesus.” He’s a good, good Father. And I can’t do it alone. I’m going to need help. I’m weak and I need help. And I’m going to see the glory of God in this; this panoramic picture of God working out the salvation of all the tribes, all the kingdoms, in all the world, through hardship and sorrow because it leads to this: the fame of God.*

Think about this, friends. If we were a group of people that lived the principles of thriving in just the first chapter of Daniel, and we become—think of the fame of God, that’s it’s like Daniel and Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego and you... and me. Think of the fame of

God. Hmm. Yeah. That's why we exist, to give God glory, to show honor to Him, and who we are and what we become.

Let's pray to that end, shall we, Grace?

Lord, we lift up our circumstances and situation to You and we give them to You, because You are beyond and above those things. You don't need moments to bless us and bring the kingdom of God into our lives. You don't need things to be teed up so that You might show yourself powerful and resilient. Lord, I'd ask that You would help us see You for who You are. I'd ask that You would help us repent in thinking that You are weak or unable or unconcerned about where the world is right now. Lord, I'd ask that You would cause us to have the courage to ask for help; to find a friend; or maybe turn a friendship into something much deeper, more purposeful. And Lord, I'd ask that You'd be famous for this, that You'd be glorified and pleased in all we do and the way we do it; that we are nothing more than the moon that reflects the sun onto people, that we would be that. Let us be that as a church. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I told you. Wonderful principles from Daniel on how to thrive and a beautiful worship. Next week we're going to look at the Book of Esther and how to live a life when you're violated, you're a victim, and how to rise above, how to have a change in your life. Esther has this dramatic change in her life where she was once the little girl and then she becomes the warrior princess. I want to tell you about that next week. Join us. We'll see you.